

Suit says Army not prepared

United Press International
OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Publishing Co. has filed suit to force the Army to disclose the combat readiness of the Army's major fighting units.

The suit, filed in Washington federal court Tuesday against Army Secretary Clifford L. Alexander Jr., seeks information on combat units in the United States, Germany, Korea and the Panama Canal Zone.

The Daily Oklahoman said Wednesday the Army has refused its written request for reports on manpower, equipment and training for more than 180 Army combat units.

The Army has said the information about combat readiness is unclassified, but should be kept secret when consolidated for several units.

The Oklahoman quoted an unnamed Army general as saying the Army does not want to release the information because it will reveal "embarrassingly low" combat readiness for a number of units.

The Oklahoma Publishing Co., which publishes the Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City Times and Colorado Springs Sun, filed the suit under the Freedom of Information Act.

An Oklahoman story Aug. 31 said the Army suppressed documents showing the combat readiness of 10 continental-based divisions deteriorated markedly between December 1977 and December 1979.

It said they had been rated fully combat ready, but last December seven had dropped to not combat ready, the lowest possible rating.

The Oklahoman, in one of a series of stories last Sunday, said the divisions at home are short by more than 17,200 personnel, mostly in non-commissioned officer positions.

The suit was filed by George R. Clark of the Washington law firm of Pierson, Ball & Dowd on behalf of the publishing company and investigative reporter Jack Taylor of the Oklahoman and Times.

Poverty-stricken Thais sell children

United Press International
BANGKOK, Thailand — The frightened children huddled on hard benches in open stalls around Bangkok railway station are on the market to be used as child labor.

They all look undernourished. Some are mentally retarded, judging from eyes that show no awareness of anything around them.

Most labor agencies, dealing in either children or adults, are clustered around the Hua Lampong railway station.

The child workers come from the drought-stricken provinces of northeastern Thailand. Their sisters and brothers are starving. Any asset around the house that can be sold or leased out on contract must be sacrificed for the family.

"Do you want some workers?" shouted a woman dressed up in a brightly colored outfit, grabbing a passerby's arm. "Boys or girls? How old do you want? They can do anything you want them to do, come with me and take a look."

Another man approached: "You better come with me, I have better workers to show you. How many do you want? What kind of factory you are running?"

According to a survey by the national statistics office, nearly 200,000 children between 11 and 18 years of age are working illegally in Thailand's factories. The number is increasing.

The survey said there are more than 3,000 factories in Bangkok alone employing children. Most factories that hire children produce candy, textiles, plastics, zinc sheets and iron rods. The working hours average 12 hours a day with no day of rest.

Most child laborers are leased out by their parents to factory agencies for 2,000-3,000 baht (\$100-150) a year. The survey said 32.9 percent of children who work in factories need money to help their families, while 26.3 percent are forced by their parents to work and 23.4 percent are working because they have no money to continue school.

They are housed in decrepit attics, given two low-quality meals a day and kept locked up for fear they will escape.

Even with the poor working conditions, many are still better off than at home.

"Do you want to go home?" one 12-year-old girl factory worker was asked. "No, at home we are always hungry. I want to work," she said.

"The problem stems from the parents themselves," a Labor Department official said. "They are so desperate, sometimes they bring their children down to the employment agencies themselves."

"Even a few thousand baht means something to them," the official said. "With their ignorance and poverty, they don't have anything to feed their children at home and believe that by sending them out the children are sure to get fed and clothed — and the parents also get some money."

From time to time, police raid illegal factories and rescue hundreds of children. The police send the waifs home, sometimes only to find later that their parents have sent them back to the sweatshops.

In July, police raided a weaving factory on the outskirts of Bangkok and rescued 15 12-year-old girls. They all looked underfed and some had become crippled or had skin diseases because of the heavy workload.

"I lived with my grandmother after my parents died," one girl said. "One day, a woman approached my grandmother, and I was taken to work in Bangkok in this weaving factory."

Sunan said she and another 14 girls worked in that factory for about two years. They were not allowed to leave factory premises during the 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. working hours. At night, they slept in a locked room on the second floor of the factory and they were given only four baht (20 cents) per week for pocket money.

The 15 girls were sent to a child welfare house before being sent home.

A welfare department official said last year alone 237 young girls and many boys were sent to the house before being returned to their parents. Some of the children were repeaters — they had been rescued more than once but had been returned to the sweatshop by their parents.

Factory owners prefer to use children because they work for lower pay and can be intimidated, with threats, to work harder.

Composites released

FBI on bombers' trails

United Press International
STATELINE, Nev. — The FBI is looking for two men, one a "haysseed type with protruding ears," as prime suspects in last month's \$3 million extortion bombing of Harvey's Wagon Wheel hotel-casino.

Agent-in-charge Joseph Yablonsky released "very credible" composite drawings Wednesday of the men who drove a van to the resort early Aug. 26, unloaded the bomb disguised as a copy machine, and wheeled it to the second-floor executive offices.

Yablonsky said both men were white. One was described as 5-foot-7, in his mid-20s, with sandy blond hair and a light-colored mustache. He was wearing a light blue pullover top and baggy white trousers.

The other was described as "a haysseed type with protruding ears," 6 feet tall, in his mid-20s.

Yablonsky said the pictures were based on descriptions by a group of entertainers who were leaving the hotel parking lot as the two wheeled the device in. He made no reference to a woman, who, some reports have said, also was in the van.

He said agents were following "many leads," and one of the reasons for reporting the progress in the investigation was "to re-stimulate public interest in the \$200,000 reward."

Two weeks ago, the FBI said it

would release composite drawings of the two suspects but then decided against it because they were "not very good."

"Now, we believe the composites are good," Yablonsky said.

A letter attached to the extortionists' sophisticated 1,000-pound bomb demanded \$3 million in exchange for instructions how to disarm it. An attempt to deliver the money failed and the bomb exploded while authorities tried to disarm it Aug. 27, causing heavy damage to the lower floors of Harvey's hotel tower.

Yablonsky said he doubted the bombers were terrorists, saying their main interest was money, but that ego also figured in the way the plot was dramatized and put together.

"The way the scheme was constructed, I believe whoever did it is an egotist with a possible military background," he said.

He said the explosive was mainly TNT, as the extortion letter said, but there may have been some plastic explosive as a "booster." He said the color of smoke from the blast was characteristic of TNT.

"But we have not gotten to the prime interest in the casino yet. We have not analyzed what is in the crater beneath where the bomb went off."

Yablonsky said that because the bomb was a sophisticated, highly technical device, the search for the extortionists has centered on individuals and manufacturing plants where the materials and technology might be available.

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